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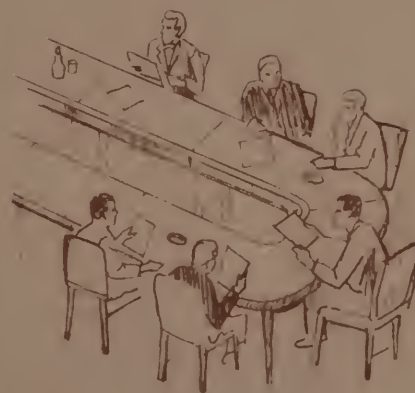
# Conference of **STATE EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS**

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
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OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR  
WASHINGTON 25, D.C.

February 24, 1965

To: State Committeemen  
State Executive Directors

From: Deputy Administrator, State and County Operations

Subject: Proceedings of Conference of State Executive Directors,  
November 16-18, 1964

Each State Committeeman and State Executive Director is to be given a copy of these proceedings. State Committeemen will find of particular interest Mr. Godfrey's remarks on "What We Expect of the State Executive Director", the roundtable conferences on "Working With the State Committee", "Achieving Effective State and County Operations", "External Relations", and "Training", and Mr. Cox's remarks on "Decision Making".

Each State Executive Director, whether or not he attended the conference, is asked to read the proceedings carefully.

A copy is also to be given to the State training officer, and copies are to be circulated to the program specialists, the chief of the administrative division, and other staff members. Additional copies can be obtained from the Area Director.

In order that we may profit as fully as possible from the discussions in the conference, we are planning to prepare a statement of standards of excellence for State Executive Directors. This statement will encompass standards in terms of desired results as well as actions necessary to achieve these results. A draft of the statement will be circulated to all State Committees and Directors for their review.

*Ray Fitzgerald*



CONFERENCE OF STATE EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS  
Washington, D. C.  
November 16-18, 1964

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## CONFERENCE OF STATE EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

The conference was attended by the following Directors, all of whom were appointed during the last three years:

Arizona - Steve J. Faltis, Jr.  
Arkansas - A. C. Mowery, Jr.  
California - Lee A. Seidell  
Colorado - Henry H. Christensen  
Hawaii - Floyd W. McCoy  
Idaho - Woodrow I. Rasmussen  
Indiana - Edwin F. Reddick  
Iowa - Walter C. Ferguson  
Kentucky - George M. Nelson, Jr.  
Michigan - Frederick E. Carroll  
Minnesota - C. Urban Ewing  
Montana - Douglas G. Smith  
Nebraska - Joseph A. Tresnak  
Nevada - Thomas W. Ballow  
New York - John K. Ervin  
Ohio - Jack C. Foust  
Oklahoma - R. Hershel Burrus  
Pennsylvania - Richard Wenner  
Puerto Rico - Carlos G. Troche  
West Virginia - Wade H. Robinson

## OPENING REMARKS

In welcoming the State Directors, Ray Fitzgerald, Deputy Administrator, State and County Operations, said that the purpose of the conference was to enable them to meet some of the officials in the Secretary's Office and in ASCS in Washington, to permit the directors to exchange with their fellow directors and Washington people ideas about ways to do their job effectively, to discuss current programs and administrative developments, and discuss the tasks ahead of us. The theme of the workshop, Mr. Fitzgerald said, is: The major responsibilities of the State Executive Director in terms of the results he should be expected to accomplish and how he can best accomplish these results.

The State Executive Director, Mr. Fitzgerald said, is responsible under the State Committee for effectiveness and efficiency of operations in State and county offices. In carrying out this responsibility, it is very important that the State Executive Director provide strong leadership under the guidance of the State Committee. He must assume this leadership and not wait for someone to give it to him. The State Committee expects the State Director to provide leadership in carrying on the day-to-day operations of the State Office and does not want or expect to direct the work of the State Office staff. Positive leadership is essential if the State Director is to fulfill successfully the job he is hired to do.

## WHAT WE EXPECT OF THE STATE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

By Horace D. Godfrey, Administrator

We are embarking on something here this morning that has been a dream of ours for quite some time and is now coming into reality. That is, that we could sit around a table for a three-day period and talk with people who have the responsibility within the States for making our agricultural programs work.

This is a key group of people. As State Executive Directors, you can really make the agricultural programs work within a State, or by inactivity or poor administration you can cause them to work badly or fail. Our goal in ASCS, as all of you know, is to make agricultural programs work and to render outstanding service to farmers.

As the full-time paid executive, you are responsible under the State Committee for the efficient and effective administration of not only the State office but all county offices within the State. We have had some State Executive Directors in the past who felt that their responsibility ceased when they ran an efficient State office organization. If any of you have this in mind, I would like for you to listen again when I say that you have the responsibility under the direction of the State Committee for the efficient and effective operation of the State office and all county offices within your State.

How well you do your job determines to a very considerable degree how well the farmers within the State are served. And how well they are served determines to a great extent how well our programs are accepted.

There is a trend among management writers to define executive jobs in terms of results. This is a new trend. In fact, the first article I saw on this I believe was about 18 months or two years ago. One of these writers, Edward Schleh, calls his book "Management by Results." I recommend that you read it. Actually we are judged by the results we obtain and the job that we do.

Now, the first question that should come to your mind is what results are expected of an Executive Director? If I were trading places with you, I think this is the first question that I would ask. Let me mention some of the results we expect of you as Executive Directors.

Since you work under the direction of the State Committee, one result we expect is that you serve the State Committee effectively. There is absolutely no justification for an Executive Director and State Committee to work at cross purposes. You either work as a team or there will be no results. Let me correct that. There will be results but not the kind that we want.

How can you serve the State Committee effectively? I have a few suggestions based on personal experience. I served a State Committee as Executive Director from 1949 to 1960. I served under two Administrations, and this is not an easy task.

I would say that to get results in serving the State Committee, the first thing you should do is to help the committee members obtain a good working knowledge of the programs. The better knowledge they have the easier it will make your job.

Secondly, you should prepare orderly agendas for each State Committee meeting. I have attended State Committee meetings where there was no agenda. I expect some of you have. In preparing an orderly agenda, you must include sufficient background material and facts for the State Committee in order that they can reach a sound conclusion. A State Committee complained one time about the Executive Director, that he had so much knowledge about the programs and had been in them such a long time that he assumed they had the same amount of knowledge. He would let them get out on a limb before he called them back. This was the greatest criticism they had and it finally developed into friction between the State Committee and the Executive Director. Instead of giving them the facts in advance, he let them reach conclusions based on insufficient facts.

You should submit, or have your program specialists submit after your review, analyses of facts, alternative courses of action and probable results, and recommendations where it is appropriate to make a recommendation. The State Committee makes the decisions but you have the information. You should have a lot more information than they have. It is entirely appropriate for a program specialist in presenting a case to the State Committee to present all of the facts, pro and con, and then to submit his recommendation. I will add here that you should have each program specialist trained in such a manner that if the State Committee does not accept the specific recommendation made, he doesn't consider it a rebuff and go off and say that the State Committee is operating against him. I have seen this happen. In our work we don't win them all. A program specialist should be a big enough man to know that. Even with the most evidence that can be obtained, the best trial lawyers in the United States don't win them all. So we should not expect to win them all either.

After the committee makes a decision, you should see that its decision is clearly understood and clearly recorded in the minutes. This is a failing that we run into quite frequently. If you don't get it straight in the meeting, there is likely to be a difference of opinion as to what conclusion was really reached. I'll tell you a personal experience. It so happened that Ed Jaenke, Ray Fitzgerald, and I met with the Under Secretary. We thought we had reached a decision. In fact, we did reach a decision. About three or four days later we were getting ready to record it. We started discussing what the decision was and unfortunately all four of us had a different idea about what it was.

Be sure you have a clear understanding as you finish each item. See that the decision is stated and that someone writes it down. It does not take but a minute longer. This is the decision; record it.

Now, if this decision requires some follow-up action on the part of a program specialist or a county office, see that the action is carried out. Follow-up is tremendously important. See that it is done. And get a report back to you so you know that it has been done. And it does not hurt to advise the State Committee that it has been accomplished. You have copying machines, and when the report comes back to you that it has been accomplished, just copy it and send it to the State Committee. Personally, I like to be informed that a follow-up action has been completed. I like to know that something we decided should be done has been done. Otherwise there is a little uncertainty in the back of my mind. If you know it has been done, you can forget about it and go on more vigorously to something else.

Above all, don't keep your committee in the dark. This entails a lot. It entails keeping them informed of your work plans, not just for next week but for a year ahead. What plans do you have for accomplishing different jobs throughout the year? I think one State committee meeting should be devoted in the early part of the year to discussing work plans for the year. Of course, they will have to be changed, they will have to be added to. An annual plan shouldn't be in too much detail. It should be in the nature of objectives; the main things you and the State committee want to stress in the coming year; the main things you want to accomplish; the main improvements in programs and administration you want to make over last year.

Tell the committee what you plan to do, then give them a report of progress as you go along and a report of achievements.

There are a few ways that you can effectively serve the State Committee and get results from serving the State Committee. You will find that the main result will be that you are operating as a team and that they are helping you do the job you have to do.

Under the State Committee, you must exercise vigorous leadership with respect to State and county operations. County offices will not just operate under the direction of a fieldman. We have found this out, much to our sorrow. You are the director; you are the leader. So under your vigorous leadership you have got to see that the State and county offices do operate as they should.

In order for county offices to operate effectively and get results, the State office must be effectively organized. You have got to have an efficient and effective organization within your State office.

Now there are many things that go into building an efficient and effective organization. You inherited most of what you have. All inheritances aren't bad and maybe they aren't all good either. Some can be changed. Some can't. If you know what kind of organization you want, you can keep

working toward it. Things you don't expect will come along to help you. But you must think about what your goal is and how you can reach it or you won't be able to take advantage of them.

The main thing is to make every employee part of a team. After all, it is a team effort. I have been in some State offices just recently where there was team effort but there were also non-members of the team. There is a tendency on the part of people to try to get as close to the boss as they can. As a result, they form cliques to try to strengthen their position. Now, if you have cliques within the State office, you will find the county offices will begin to associate with one or another of these cliques.

You are the only person who can stop this. The way to do it is to make them a part of the team under your leadership, to delegate responsibility, to give each person a real job to do, and to fully utilize the talents of every employee. For the most part, you must work with the people you have. And every one of them has some talent of some kind.

Let me use a personal observation again. We have a man who in my opinion has about as much talent as any other man in this organization. When I came to Washington in 1961, this man came to work with the morning paper. He read that. He went to early lunch and bought the noon paper. He read that. Then he went out in midafternoon for coffee and bought the afternoon paper and came back and read that. In the last four years prior to my coming in here he had had three different supervisors. During the reorganization in 1962, I called this man in and asked if he would serve as a deputy director of one of the divisions. I thought he was going to faint. He said, they put me out to graze eight years ago and I have been grazing. I said, I want you to get back and work. This man was unhappy all this period. He is completely rejuvenated now and one of the happiest men you will find in the organization. He has been invaluable to all of us. We have not called on him for a thing yet that he has not come forth with some real good answers.

I say it is up to you to develop your people and use their talents. They have talents. Some of them may be assigned wrong now. They may need a reassignment. I think you know how to do it. If you are to be a good Executive Director, you have got to know how to do it. This is what it boils down to.

Now, this requires training. You are responsible for seeing that the people in the State offices are trained. There are some program specialists in the State offices with 25 to 30 years of experience who still need to be trained. There are very different ways of doing the training job. It is your responsibility. People look for a leader. They are always seeking a leader. In fact, most of us are. Most of the people that walk the face of the earth today are looking for a leader, for someone to set an example for them. You should set an example by effectively organizing your State office, planning your work, and doing the job of leading.

If you are doing the kind of a job that should be done as Executive Director, the office is going to run real well whether you are there or not. And you will be informed about what is going on in the State office. Not by snooping. An executive who has to snoop is not an executive. An executive who earns the trust of his people to the point where they want to and do keep him informed is a real executive. You should not have to ask what is going on, because if you establish yourself as a leader then you will be informed. You have to train the people to weed out what is important and what is not important. And when you get your staff trained properly, they will report to you on the important things and not take your time on unimportant ones.

It is your responsibility to coordinate the work within the State office. A program specialist who is a good specialist will feel that there is no other work as important as what he is responsible for. For example, an ACP program specialist will tend to feel that county offices have nothing to do but work on ACP. The production adjustment specialist is going to feel that same way if he is good, and the price support specialist. Now, it is your responsibility to coordinate the staff work within the State office in such a way that they realize that somebody else has something to do also. And that the county office has something to do other than ACP or production adjustment or price support or compliance. You can get your staff people so isolated from each other and from you that they never are in a position to even answer a question about whether we have a price support program on some commodity. And, believe it or not, we have some production adjustment specialists who couldn't answer a single question about price support or about ACP. It should not be this way. It is your responsibility as State Executive Director to so coordinate the work and provide the leadership that they all understand each other's problems.

Secretary Freeman has done a tremendous job in getting a better understanding between the seventeen services in the Department of Agriculture. He has done it primarily by having a staff meeting every morning of the week. He is very particular to call on the different agencies to tell what is going on in their fields. ASCS gets called on about every morning because we have so many action programs. Ed Jaenke and Ray Fitzgerald attend these meetings as well as myself.

What I am saying is that this has been an effective tool of drawing the agencies within the Department together and letting them know what is happening in the fields other than their particular job. We now know something about the Commodity Exchange Authority. A lot of us did not know anything about it before. We are kept very well informed on operations of the Farmers Home Administration, Rural Areas Development, Rural Electrification Administration, and the rest. They have problems and these are discussed in staff. For a while we were the only ones who had any problems that were discussed. A while back we held the center of the stage for quite some time. Now we are relieved to hear that other people have some problems too, and our problems seem of a minor nature now compared to those that some others are having.

It is your responsibility as Executive Director to do in the State office the same thing that Secretary Freeman has done here.

I mentioned county office operations. County offices should operate effectively and efficiently and render the best possible public service. I don't have to discuss this in detail because the standards we expect county offices to achieve are spelled out in the Management Appraisal of County Offices, Form ASCS 126. If you will study that form very carefully, you will find that it outlines pretty well how county offices should operate.

You cannot isolate yourself in the State office and see that county offices operate effectively and efficiently. You are working with people, and people work better for people they know. You--the State Executive Director--should know your county office people--the managers, the chief clerks, and as many of the individual clerks as possible.

You should know your county committees because they will work better for you if they know you. There are many ways of getting to know them. If they don't know you, you will never find out what their problems are. You can't solve a problem for a county office unless you know what it is. The only way you can solve it is to find out what it is, and if they have confidence enough in you they will bring it to you. They have got to know you personally before they will do that.

We went through a period in North Carolina when our county office people thought that every State office specialist had horns. We finally convinced them that they didn't, that all we were trying to do in the State office was to help them do the best job they were capable of doing.

You need a real good training program. I think every one of you knows my feelings about training. There is no other activity in which you participate which is as important as the training program. You cannot expect a person to do the kind of a job that you expect from him unless he is properly trained. This includes each one of you. You never know a person's capability until you have first trained him and told him what you want of him. Once you do this and give him the tools to work with, you can expect and insist on top performance from him.

You cannot know what training your people need unless you know them. I am coming back now to knowing your people. You cannot depend upon second-hand information. A lot of it should be first hand. We make the mistake many times, I think, of depending on our fieldman for information about county office operations. But the fieldman is a member of the family, so to speak, of the counties within his district. The fieldman has a difficult job, because he is serving those below him and those above him. He may see those above him once a month but he is going to see those below him more often. Some of you have served as fieldmen and you know what I am talking about. So as State Director you need firsthand information and this comes from knowing personally the people that you work with.

The next point I want to touch on is external relationships--relationships with people outside ASCS. This deals with farmers, the general public, agri-business, and other agricultural agencies. Farmers cannot be expected to operate within the program rules unless they know what they are. Nor can you expect farmers to participate in a program unless they know what the program is. This is one of your responsibilities--to see that they know. It is your responsibility to see that people other than farmers know about farm programs. This means the general public. It means agri-business. And it means other agricultural agencies. I will repeat something that my dad told me when I was about fourteen years old. I was being real critical of somebody else because he did not see the same way that I did and after he listened to this on two or three different occasions he just said, Horace, have you ever caught a fly with vinegar? And I said, what does that have to do with it? He said, why don't you try molasses? You can catch a lot of flies with molasses.

You will never attract the other agencies and the outside organizations by being bitter, by being critical. But you can use a little sweetness along the way and I expect you will have them on your side. They can't be any place else once they understand the situation. They are going to have to support you, because they can't afford not to support you. That is the kind of program we operate. And I know many States where every agri-business organization within the State supports the farm programs, because they can't afford to do anything else.

Now, I would like to re-emphasize that you must develop within your State an alert, energetic, and effective team. I am not referring merely to the State office. Some of the soundest advice you will get will be from county people. But they have got to be considered a part of the team also. It has got to be a team effort all the way through from the State office right on down through your community committees. You will also find that some of your best advisers will be community committeemen who know you and have your confidence.

Unless the county committeemen and county office managers know you and have confidence in you, you are going to be ineffective in operating our farm programs. You are going to be ineffective as a State Executive Director.

Probably the most important factor in building a team from the bottom up is for you to be a good all-around administrator, with respect for every person who works with you. I recently heard one of the best salesmen in the United States make a speech that impressed me very much. He was talking to a group of agri-business people who wanted good salesmen. He came to one point--what makes a good salesman? He said the thing that he looked for in a salesman was integrity. He said if a man had integrity then he could build everything else into him. But regardless of all his other attributes, if he does not have integrity, he may sell for you for a while but in the long run he will not be good for the organization.

I would say in conclusion that we expect two things of State Executive Directors. We expect integrity and we expect results. And this covers a wide, wide field. Everything else I have said could come under these two things--integrity and results.

We have called you in to try to give you the benefit of the knowledge that the various individuals in the organization and some outside our organization have on how to become a better State Executive Director. I would say that we have the best material to build on that we have had in all the time I have been associated with the organization. And we have some good people to work with you in helping you develop into the kind of State Executive Director that you'd like to be. By working together we can do a great deal to make the excellent record we have established in ASCS even better than it is.

## WORKING WITH THE STATE COMMITTEE

### Roundtable Conference

#### Moderators:

Charles L. Frazier, Assistant Deputy Administrator, State and County Operations, Chairman  
James P. Dyess, Director, Northwest Area  
F. Wainwright Blease, Director, South Central Area

In introducing this subject, Mr. Frazier said that the theme of the discussion could well be "how to grow with the State Committee." The State Executive Director should help the committee to carry its job at a high level throughout the State. He should see that the committee is well informed and should sift out the important material coming from Washington and see that it is well organized and clearly presented to the committee. Following is a general summary of the discussion.

#### Preparation for Committee Meetings

The State Executive Director should check with members of the State Committee to see if they have matters which should be put on the agenda.

In one State, the appropriate program specialist prepares a one-page brief of each important matter which will be discussed at the committee meeting, including facts, background material, applicable procedures and recommendations. This facilitates consideration by the committee. Several States send the committee members, in advance of the meeting, a brief summary of the major items on the agenda. Possible alternative actions may be indicated.

Recommendations to the State Committee should be developed by the appropriate program specialist and the State Executive Director, but it is presumptuous to forecast the committee's decision before consideration by the committee.

If there is a problem in getting the State Committee to decide, it is proper for the State Executive Director to indicate that a decision is needed under regulations or Washington directives.

Most of the State Directors indicated that the State Committee meets with the farmer fieldmen once a month. Usually each fieldman meets with the committee in turn. Mr. Frazier emphasized DASCO's view on this--it is important that such monthly meetings be held so that the fieldmen can have an opportunity to keep the committee directly informed about problems and progress in their districts.

Mr. Blease suggested that if the committee is having trouble getting through the agenda, consideration should be given to whether the committee is (1) going into some matters in too much detail, (2) considering items which do not need committee consideration, or (3) meeting too

infrequently to meet its responsibilities. The State Executive Director should discuss the problem with the Chairman. It is also appropriate for the Chairman to ask the other members to go over any material sent to them in advance of the meeting if there is any problem in this regard.

In one State, after each meeting a list is prepared of matters requiring action, what is to be done, and who is responsible. This informal list is sent to the committee members the next day. Although it is not an official record, it assists in quickly confirming assigned speaking dates, conferences, reports, and other action for all concerned.

#### The State Committee and the State Office Staff

Mr. Frazier pointed out that the State Committee should have free access to the program specialists, but at the same time a State Committeeman should not act, so to speak, as a section head or undertake to give special instructions to individual specialists. They should receive instructions from the State Executive Director or the whole committee. By planning for State Committee meetings carefully, matters which the committee wants to know about and policies which they should establish are brought into committee discussions in a timely way; confusion and difficulties can be avoided.

Mr. Blease pointed out if there are any questions with respect to an important matter, it should be taken back to the State Committee. The Area Directors should assist in getting a clear understanding of the importance of the committeemen working as a committee. There should also be a clear understanding on the part of the specialists that they are to discuss matters to be considered in committee meetings with the State Executive Director prior to the meeting. This will avoid loss of valuable time and insure proper preparation for State Committee questions.

While it was apparent that the relationship of farmer fieldmen to the State Committee varies from State to State, the same general considerations apply as in the case of specialists. Again, Mr. Dyess reminded the group, it is important that the State Committee members operate as a committee, work through the State Executive Director on day-to-day operations, and see that important matters are brought up for determination in committee meetings.

The discussion brought out that the State Committee has the primary responsibility in the staffing of fieldman and top specialist positions. It was suggested that the State Executive Director should submit to the committee for its consideration the names of well qualified persons, describing their experience and other qualifications. Exactly how these matters will be handled will inevitably vary somewhat from State to State, but it is not expected that actions on any key personnel will be undertaken except at the direction of the State Committee.

#### General Discussion

It was pointed out that we expect the Chairman will spend more time in the office than the other members. However, it is important that committee

meetings be so planned that the entire committee is kept informed on important matters. One State prepares a report each Friday afternoon and mails it to the committee members so that they will be posted on developments. Each specialist writes the section relating to matters for which he is responsible. In almost every State, the State Executive Director makes a practice of telephoning members of the committee on important matters. This is very much appreciated by them.

The question of who should attend area and Washington meetings and meetings of other organizations was discussed briefly. Some States make a practice of rotating these trips among the members of the State Committee. The committee decides who is to attend each meeting. In other cases, the committee looks to the Chairman for guidance.

Mr. Dyess reminded the group that the State Committee and individual members frequently have an important part in the State training program. Members should participate in any field training meetings and conferences involving county or community committeemen, particularly in discussing national and State committee policies and program objectives.

In summarizing the discussion, Mr. Frazier reiterated the importance of the State Executive Director assisting and building the State Committee in the eyes of the public and making clear to other agencies as well the fact that the committee has overall responsibility for the effectiveness of program operations throughout the State, for establishing State policies, and for hearing appeals and making other specific determinations. He reminded the group that in any State where we have a well informed and highly respected State Committee, the reputation of the State staff is enhanced and strengthened.

# ACHIEVING EFFECTIVE STATE AND COUNTY OPERATIONS

## Roundtable Conference

### Moderators:

Charles M. Cox, Assistant Deputy Administrator,  
State and County Operations, Chairman  
John C. Brown, Jr., Assistant to the Deputy Administrator,  
State and County Operations  
Eugene W. Bayol, Director, Southeast Area

Following is a summary of the discussion.

### Relations of the State Executive Director and Specialists

Common practice is to require the specialists to clear major matters with the State Executive Director but to permit them to handle other matters on their own, thus saving the Director's time. It is also common practice for the specialists to go over appeals cases with the State Executive Director prior to the hearing before the State Committee.

### Staff Meetings

Many of the States reported that they hold weekly staff meetings with the specialists and the chief of the administrative division. A few States hold them at longer intervals or when needed. The States which have staff meetings reported that they are valuable in that they keep everyone informed of what is going on and give each specialist a general understanding of programs other than his own. As one State Executive Director put it, this helps to keep the specialist from being in an ivory tower.

The common plan followed in holding staff meetings is for the State Executive Director to have a list of matters he wants to take up. The specialists report on activities in the past week and what will be coming up in the week ahead. The State Executive Director may make special assignments, such as the preparation of a newspaper story, or may even ask a specialist to assist in another section during the week. One State reported that the staff meeting is used primarily as a planning meeting and that it helps to create teamwork. Another State uses staff meetings, among other things, to plan the work schedule for the operations assistants.

A number of States also have monthly meetings of all employees. In one case, the State training officer is responsible for arranging for discussion of a program or other matters at each of these meetings. This has proved popular.

## Supervising County Operations

The State Executive Director has general responsibility, under the State Committee, for seeing that county offices carry out programs effectively and efficiently. The State Director should have some systematic way of ascertaining whether individual county offices are operating efficiently. This can be done through reports from the fieldmen, specialists, and operations assistants. Farmers' complaints should be carefully watched. It was also pointed out that the State Executive Director should not rely entirely on second-hand information, but to the extent possible should get into county offices and have personal knowledge of county office managers.

What should be done if a county office is not operating as it should will depend upon the particular situation. If an operations assistant has made a review, the fieldman should review the report with the county committee and the manager and schedule training to meet specific weaknesses. The fieldman must follow up and help the manager learn to apply good management practices. If the county office staff is divided and is not working as a team, it may be necessary to make changes in personnel.

Several States reported that they sometimes bring the county committee and manager to the State office to meet with the State Committee and the State Executive Director to discuss difficulties and what should be done. The importance of working with the county committee was stressed.

If the manager is not doing a good job, a training plan which will help him strengthen his management skills should be worked out. It may be desirable to send him to one or two well run county offices for a week or two. The same could apply to a chief clerk.

## Training

Several States mentioned the importance of practical training for farmer fieldmen in good management practices and public relations. The fieldman should be able to analyze county office organization and operations, spot weaknesses, and train managers. It was pointed out that county committees need to have a better recognition of the importance of management and of selecting good managers.

## Staffing in County Offices

Some county offices have a larger staff than they would really need if they were properly organized and were operating efficiently. Of course, judging efficiency is not an easy matter--for example, a county office with a large staff might seem to be inefficient but in fact may have done an outstanding job in obtaining farmer cooperation and as a result may have very high participation in programs. The workload formula is helpful. It was pointed out that the ideal situation would be to have a staff which could adequately meet the regular workload and hire temporary employees only for peak periods.

One State reported that it relies on the fieldman to determine what is to be done if a county office requests an additional job, with the stipulation that the county must live within its budget. The fieldman makes a review of the county's workload and general situation.

#### Fieldmen's Meetings with County Office Managers

Two of the States reported that it is standard practice for State office specialists to attend the monthly district meetings of the fieldman and his managers which are held following the fieldman's meetings in the State office. Sometimes the State Executive Director and members of the State Committee also attend. State office people commonly visit county offices going to or returning from these meetings. Another practice is for State office personnel to travel with the fieldman when he is visiting several counties on a quick trip. During these visits the State office people are afforded an opportunity to discuss program matters with county office personnel and committeemen and gain first hand knowledge of program operations.

## EXTERNAL RELATIONS

### Roundtable Conference

#### Moderators:

Charles M. Cox, Assistant Deputy Administrator  
State and County Operations, Chairman  
Maurice L. DuMars, Director, Information Division  
Willard Lamphere, Deputy Director, Information Division  
Carl A. Larson, Director, Southwest Area

In introducing the panel, Mr. Cox pointed out that public relations and information are an integral part of program administration. There is need for someone in the State office to coordinate information activity, under the State Executive Director. It is very important that a good information job be done and for this we must depend mainly on the State and county offices.

Mr. DuMars and Mr. Lamphere described the work of the Information Division. Mr. Larson referred to various opportunities for explaining the farm programs and for calling the attention of both farmers and non-farm people to ASCS operations. For example, this can be done at a dinner at which an award is made to an outstanding county office in the State. It should be possible to get newspaper and perhaps radio coverage for such an event. One State mentioned that it prepared a story for use by the local newspapers relating to an award to the outstanding county. Pictures were taken with a polaroid camera and given to the papers.

Mr. Lamphere and Mr. Larson emphasized the importance of getting acquainted with editors and radio station operators. Find out what they want and what form they want it in, and then provide it in time. Remember they work under deadlines and appreciate receiving material well in advance.

Reference was also made to the opportunity to inform non-farm people about ASCS operations and programs at meetings of civic and service clubs, church groups, the League of Women Voters, chambers of commerce, etc.

Mr. DuMars pointed out that special ACP projects which are designated to combat problems recognized by a whole community will enable us to reach town and city people with the ACP message.

The counties where a good information job is being done are the ones where local ideas are being used and the things provided from Washington are only supplemental to the things that the county and State office staff are doing.

The information job is something that has to be worked at all the time by everyone who can contribute if it is to be successful. It is essential to

know personally and to keep informed the people who are influential, who are listened to, who handle mass dissemination of information, who are leaders in local organizations and affairs. You will find that they are pretty reasonable people and they will find the same thing about you, and the programs as well, if you take the time to get acquainted. Be sure to have the county managers put these leaders on the mailing list for the newsletter. Invite them to any public meetings which are called. Maybe the State Committee and the county committee should invite these leaders occasionally to meet with them to discuss the background and objectives of the programs and other matters of interest to them. Go call on them. Pay attention to them and you will have friends when you need them. If you keep them informed, they will usually give you help when you need it--for example in connection with sign-ups and new programs.

One of the States said that it would be helpful if they were informed when something is sent from ASCS in Washington to radio and television stations. Mr. DuMars said that arrangements will be made to do this. Another State suggested that motion pictures relating to one of the ASCS programs or other matters be made each year.

Other subjects covered include the committee system as an information medium, the need for an information plan in each State and county, future of PIP (Public Inquiry Project), use of State ASCS conferences for public information purposes and ASCS relationships with the Department Office of Information and the Office of the Secretary.

## TRAINING

### Panel:

Leonard E. Hoffman, Assistant to Deputy Administrator,  
State and County Operations, Chairman  
Wayne L. Wang, Staff Assistant  
John H. Thurston, Staff Assistant

Mr. Hoffman: The training program was established in January, 1963, in considerable part as the result of the recommendations of the Study Committee on the Farmer Committee System appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture. Attention was directed first to development of a program for informing and orienting county and community committeemen. A National Training Advisory Committee and State training committee and training officers have been appointed. Training centers have been set up in most of the larger States. The results of training sessions in these centers for small groups of county office managers have been particularly impressive.

Mr. Wang: We should evaluate management in terms of results accomplished. The State Executive Director has to multiply his efforts and his philosophy through people to develop an effective team. This he can do through training in the following four respects:

1. Orientation training and follow-up meetings of county and community committeemen. If all committeemen have a good understanding of programs, policies, and their jobs, a more highly effective committee system will develop.
2. The pipeline device whereby each fieldman goes back to his district after the fieldmen's meetings in the State office and meets with his managers. This gets current information and current philosophy down to the counties. The managers then go back and have staff meetings with the clerks. Without this kind of a pipeline, you can hardly have adequate communication.
3. Program training meetings. We can do a great deal to improve program administration through proper preparation, sequencing, and outlining of high quality training materials and visual aids. Employee understanding of programs depends in large measure on how ideas are presented. Here the training officer and the program specialist should cooperate as a team. The State Executive Director should see that this working relationship is established and that program training receives primary emphasis. We must never overlook the fact that the purpose of all training is to improve operations.
4. State training center. There are many different concepts of training. There is what you might call maintenance training, to maintain current understanding of programs as changes occur. This you can do in fieldman

district meetings, staff meetings, and periodic program meetings. But there is also definite need for training in depth, for new people and for others who have particular need. These people should be brought into the State training center for more concentrated and intensive training in both programs and management. In this way we can head off difficulties and errors before they occur. At the same time, you will find that the program specialists who give the program training at the State training center will become better informed and more effective. They have to overlearn their programs in order to teach them. They also have to learn to understand the programs as the managers must operate them in the counties, which is a different thing than just interpreting regulations and instructions.

The State office must be responsible for program results in counties in the sense of knowing the best ways to operate a program and training all managers in these best operating methods. This is very important. In all our activities, realistic but high standards and expectations must be set for county office management and program operations by those of you in leadership positions. The best ways to organize and manage an office and to operate programs should be identified and communicated to all offices. The State offices must take the leadership in setting these standards to assure that high quality and uniform methods of operations are carried out in all counties. This results in improved management, better communications and control, reduced cost, and improved effectiveness, all of which contribute to our end goal of outstanding service to farmers.

Mr. Thurston: Whether you're thinking of county office managers or fieldmen or State Executive Directors, the ones who do an outstanding job and who have the greatest sense of accomplishment are the ones who in one way or another have gotten the job well organized and their people developed. Then they can come in to a meeting in Washington or elsewhere and the work continues at the same high level of excellence.

There are ways to achieve this result, and men who are outstanding as supervisors seem to do it in somewhat the same way. In general, they take a good look at what is needed in the way of organizing the office and the work and training to get things on a continuing basis of excellent performance. They develop their people so that they know the programs and, if they are supervisors, know how to plan, organize, and supervise. Then they can do the job easily and well and keep on doing it that way. That means taking time out somewhere along the line. It requires a real investment of time but it pays tremendous dividends in the end.

We have an obligation to the public not to let a county office manager or a clerk or a fieldman do a continuing poor job. When a person is not coming up to par, we have a duty to stop and find out what the trouble is and to do whatever is necessary to see that this condition doesn't continue. This may call for some intensive and sometimes even painful training. It may mean bringing a manager into the State office, having the fieldman work with him over a long period of time to help him acquire skill in organizing, planning, training, and supervising, maybe even sending him for a week to each of two or three other county offices which are very well operated.

In nearly all of these cases, something can be done to bring about substantial improvement. We must have real interest in and concern for the employee as a person if we want him to improve.

In the case of county committeemen, we are asking a great deal of them when we say we expect them to hold effective committee meetings, and particularly when we ask them to hold legal hearings. We hope that the training packet on "How to Hold Good County Committee Meetings" has been helpful. All new county committeemen and managers, after they have been on the job a little while, should be brought together to go through a session on how to hold good committee meetings. There should be a continuing program in the State to do this.

The way in which the county committee operates, particularly in holding hearings, will have a lot to do with the efficiency of the office and, more than that, with the respect and attitude which the people in the county have toward the county office. This tends to set the level and the tone for the whole office.

Discussion. The State training officer should be the right hand of the State Committee and the State Executive Director in developing training plans to fit general and individual needs, in arranging training sessions, in helping specialists plan training in particular programs, and in himself giving training relating to management and supervision, human relations, public speaking, writing improvement, and so forth.

You shouldn't think of the State training officer as someone who will do all the training. Each member of the State office staff should give training in the program or operation for which he has responsibility. You should draw on the knowledge and abilities of the entire State office staff. Often county office managers and clerks who have a knack for training can be utilized.

In one State, in connection with workshops for clerks, training has been given in improving speed and comprehension of reading. Many of the clerks pursued this further on their own. In the same State a professor from the State University was invited to discuss with county office managers what might be called the psychology of management and motivating people to do their best.

In holding workshops for county office clerks, several States have had only the clerks attend so that they would feel free to discuss whatever they wanted to. Other States had both clerks and managers, but not from the same counties at the same workshops. One State had a county committee chairman and a county office manager discuss what was helpful to them and what was not with respect to performance by the clerks. In another State the clerks were assigned to panels to discuss different subjects. In still another State, a member of the State Committee and the State Executive Director took part in a series of workshops for county office clerks.

Another State had clerks from the State office give the instruction in letter writing, the fog index, and the operation and maintenance of office equipment. It is important to involve as many people as we can in giving training.

States should make full use of their State and local colleges and universities in connection with training. Many colleges have excellent training film libraries. Several States reported that they have made arrangements with college faculty members to visit the State office and several county offices and plan or participate in a training program fitted to our operations. This worked very well indeed. Where such visits were not made, however, the training given by college people tended to be related to private business rather than ASCS operations and was not of great benefit.

One State reported that it brings new county office managers into the State office after they have been on the job two or three months to go over the background, objectives, and provisions of the programs and to get an understanding of State office operations. These managers, the State office has found, need a follow-up session a year or so later. Older office managers also need to come in occasionally.

When an employee is authorized to attend outside training, we should be sure it fits his specific needs and will be of help to ASCS. What we give ourselves usually meets our needs better than that given by an outside institution, although such institutions can profitably participate in order to discuss general principles and to add variety and new viewpoints.

The training program and activities must remain under the control and direction of the State Executive Director. He is responsible for seeing that an effective program is developed and carried into operation.

## DECISION MAKING

By Charles M. Cox

Assistant Deputy Administrator, State and County Operations

A decision is a course of action consciously taken to achieve a desired result. Decision making is a major concern of State Executive Directors. This may involve assisting the State Committee in making a good decision, in helping them to resolve problems which are of concern to them and which fall within their policy making field. However, you cannot escape responsibility for the decisions that the State Committee makes, because they are dependent upon you and upon your staff for background, for precedent, and for facts, so that they can apply their own values to the alternative causes of action which are available to them.

Then, of course, you have your own decisions to make on problems which no one else can properly decide. These are decisions primarily in the field of operations, and they are decisions that you and only you can make.

You also have responsibility for delegating decision making authority to other people on your staff: program specialists, farmer fieldmen, the head of your administrative and fiscal division, your operation assistants, and others whom you depend upon to help you get your job done.

It sometimes is a rather difficult thing to delegate your decision making authority. There are several reasons why people hesitate to delegate authority. One is because they sometimes become imbued with the idea that perhaps no one could do quite as good a job as they themselves can do. This is a terrific mistake. I was glad to hear Wayne Wang point out to you folks yesterday that with the tremendous job you Executive Directors have to do, you can never hope to get it done by yourselves. You have to multiply your sphere of influence by training and motivating those who work for you and who depend upon you for direction and guidance. You have to work through them even though they may not be able to do the job quite as well as you can do it yourself. Often, however, they can do it better. This, in fact, is what you should aim at. You can often find people who can do a job as well as you can or better if you are willing to look for them and if you are willing to help build them and maintain some degree of confidence in them. So this is a very important part of your responsibility.

As a State Executive Director you often have responsibility for trying to get a good decision from a group. Sometimes this is a decision which is arrived at by members of your staff who are experts in a particular field. Sometimes this is a matter of getting a good decision from your State committee. A vice president of General Motors once remarked to a friend of his what a wonderful decision had been made by one of his colleagues. His friend said yes, but think how much more wonderful this

decision would have been if it had been rendered by a committee. Sometimes it is quite simple for you as an individual to arrive at the facts in making a determination but it is not always equally easy to get a group of people to arrive at a consensus.

It is important that we make our decisions promptly. I don't want to brag on myself but I made a decision rather promptly this morning. The Administrator called me and said that he wanted to see me immediately. I told him I was on this program the first thing this morning. He said I want to see you right now, so I made a decision to go up to see him.

If you don't make your decisions promptly, particularly people who occupy positions such as you do, you are going to delay the work of a multitude of other people. In your case you are likely to delay not only the work of your program specialists, of your farmer fieldmen, but, what is more important, the work of your county committeemen and your county office employees who are trying to serve farmers out on the firing line. Not only are hundreds of employees involved by your failure or your delay, but also you may affect literally thousands of farmers who are participating or cooperating in our farm programs. Not only may you affect people who are below you, but as many of you have found out and some the hard way, you may affect the lives and fortunes of those who are above you. This may be Mr. Fitzgerald, it could be Mr. Godfrey, it could be Under Secretary Murphy or it could be the Secretary himself.

And so we need to bear in mind the need for prompt decisions. In Dante's Inferno we are told that the very first group that he met were those who could not make up their minds. They had lived without blame or praise. Heaven had cast them out and Hell would not receive them. It may help to remember that not all decisions that you make are going to be flawless. Good managers strive to be perfectionists but they do not make perfection their goal. Leland I. Doan, who is the President of Dow Chemicals, in an article in Fortune Magazine estimated that there is perhaps as much as a 15% error in the very best decisions that are made in industry.

It is your responsibility to see to it that the specialists, the fieldmen, the county committees, the managers, and others make decisions promptly. Not only this, but you must not be backward or hesitant in suggesting to your State committee that they do the same thing. Of course, I recognize that this takes some diplomacy on your part. But it is possible for you to point out that the work for which they are responsible will suffer if decisions are not made with dispatch.

About 95% of the decisions we make are what we might call routine decisions. The other 5% are basic, far reaching, precedent making. They usually involve people rather than things. For example, sometimes you have to decide whether some of your subordinates are doing a good job or not, and if they are not, and you are sure they are not, what to do about remedying the situation. I have found in my experience that this is one decision that most people find distasteful, one they would like not to have to face.

Sometimes we think we are too busy to take the time to resolve the hard problems that we have to face. In actuality, neglecting a problem only magnifies it and makes it worse and more difficult to reach a proper decision at a later time. Let's face it. These decisions that come in the 5% category are tough because they involve choice, they involve conflict, they involve alternative courses of action. Somebody is not going to like our decision. Maybe we are afraid to risk decision, and with good reason because it may be dangerous. It may reflect adversely on our capacity.

Most of you I am sure have heard about Mr. Parkinson and Parkinson's Law. One of his quips is that the time required for decision is in inverse proportion to the importance of the problem under discussion. As an example he mentions the meeting of a board of directors where the first problem under consideration was the painting of a machine shed which was going to involve an expenditure of two or three hundred dollars. Both John Smith and Joe Jones who were on the Board of Directors were thoroughly familiar with this problem and it was debated at length, because both of them had had some experience about painting a machine shed. They knew what kind of paint was the best and cheapest and most effective. After struggling with this problem for two or three hours they came to the conclusion as to what should be done about it.

Then he gives another example which involved the expenditure of about \$10,000,000. It involved the establishment of a new factory in a far away country. There were no men on the board that knew much about this subject. It seemed to them that the matter had been well presented by a staff specialist, that it had the benefit of expert advice, and so they disposed of this \$10,000,000 item in a matter of a few minutes. So there you go.

The experts tell us that every decision we make involves two elements. One is the so-called factual element. This is based on testing--on experience. The other is the value element and this involves judgment--judgment as to what you want to accomplish, where you want to go, what kind of results you want to obtain, what in your belief is right and what is wrong, what is just and what is unjust.

They say that the further down the administrative line you go in making decisions, the more likelihood that the decision will be based on the factual or experience element and the less likelihood that it will be based on judgment. In our organization I think this is unfortunate, because we have to depend to such a great degree upon farmer committees at the local and State level for many of our decisions. But there is a good reason why this obtains. At some time in the past somebody goofed--somebody made a mistake, somebody exercised poor judgment. So the higher echelons go to work to amend the rules and regulations so that there won't be any opportunity to make the same kind of mistake again. They tell us that experience is a wonderful thing because it helps us to recognize our mistakes when we make them again.

We need to have some objectives in mind as we try to reach decisions. What are we trying to accomplish with our farm programs? What kind of agriculture do we want? What kind of administrative organization are we trying to fashion to carry out and to develop farm programs? How do we feel about people who work for us and whom we have to depend upon to get our job done?

I think I might be able to give you an example of the application of the factual element and the value element as it would involve the hiring of a farmer fieldman. Suppose that Congressman John Doe, whom we know well and whose vote is very important in connection with agriculture, suggests to you that you appoint a farmer fieldman whom you know quite well is not qualified for the job. If you go entirely on the basis of the factual or experience element, I assume you would make the appointment. But if you have some judgment and some guts and you happen to know the Congressman as well as he knows you, the chances are that you will argue with him and try to convince him that the appointment of this particular person to a job for which he is not qualified will not only reflect adversely on you and on your organization, but will reflect adversely on him as well. And then with some diplomacy perhaps you can approach him with respect to the appointment of some other person whom he knows equally well and who could do the job well for you and who would reflect credit upon both the Congressman and the Department of Agriculture.

In many cases, as I have indicated, you are not making a decision yourself but are trying to obtain a good decision from a group. Often this will take longer than if you made the decision yourself. But there are some people who believe, and I think rightly so, that a decision which may not be perfect but which is concurred in and backed up by everyone you depend upon to carry it out is perhaps better than a perfect decision with only fifty percent of the people behind it. In other words, it is very important to have the support and the backing of the group that you depend upon to carry out the decision, because otherwise you are making your decisions in a vacuum. If you do a good job in informing those who are working with you in arriving at a decision, the likelihood is that you will be able to arrive at a consensus that will be acceptable, helpful, and beneficial to the entire organization. But by all means we should be sure that we give them all the facts and remember that things are not always as they appear to be.

I am reminded of a story of a young man who was applying for a job as a lion tamer. The manager of the show took him in to see the act so he could decide for himself whether or not he wanted to follow this particular profession or avocation. The act consisted of a young lady who was very scantily clad getting into a lion's cage with a whip in her hand and putting the lion through his paces. The finale of the act was for the lion to come over and snuggle his long mangy head against this beautiful gal's breast. So when the act was over the manager turned to the man who was applying for the job and said, now do you think you could do that? He said, I don't know whether I could or not, but if you'll get that damn lion out of there, I'd like to try it.

Any decision, whether arrived at by yourself or with a group, will be a better decision if you follow certain logical steps. I may say to you that in all my experience in the Department of Agriculture we never had a better decision maker, in my judgment, than the man who stood before you yesterday afternoon for a few minutes, our Under Secretary, Charles Murphy. I think he follows the principles of good decision making about as well as any person it has ever been my privilege to know. And, believe me, he has a great many decisions to make, not only those in which ASCS is interested but those in which other agencies of the Department are interested as well.

I am told by John Thurston that people who have taken the so-called Kepner-Tregoe course in decision making have found that they have developed an orderly set of logical steps that are more likely to achieve a good decision. These steps are as follows:

First, study the situation. What problems are there for you to decide? A problem is the difference between what should be and what actually exists.

If you are like most of us, you will find that you have more problems than you have time to decide. So your next job is to sort them out and try to figure out which is the most important, where can you get the most mileage, where can you get the most accomplishment.

The next thing to do is to specify and define the problem in detail. In this connection you try to decide what the problem is, what it is not, where it is, where it is not in your organization, when does it happen and when does it not happen, how much it is and how much it is not. After this is done you try to identify the difference between the "is" and the "is not".

Be sure that within necessary practical limits that you get all of the available facts. We can't always be sure that we have all the facts and I suspect we would be surprised how many decisions are made without all the facts being available. And sometimes it is impossible to defer a decision until all of the facts are in, so there has to be some practical application of this truism.

The next thing that you do is to list the possible causes of your problem. It may be that some of your employees, rather than helping you find a solution for the problem, are the problem themselves. It may be that some more attention to detail and some more concern about your organization and about people on your own part will serve to cure the problem.

Then you must set about to test the various causes. Analyze the possible causes one at a time because you can't always be sure what caused your problem. Reexamine your objectives. Some of us spend so much time putting out fires that we don't have time to adopt any general principles to guide us in making our determinations. In connection with any problem

that you have, try to relate it to the overall objectives that you have established for yourself as an Executive Director or for your organization.

Examine the resources and limitations not only of yourself but of the people who work for you and of your organization. It may be you will have to take a look at your budget. It may mean you may have to take a look at your people. Or facilities, such as available office space, may be a limiting factor.

Consider the alternative courses of action that are open to you. And unfortunately there are many times when the courses of action that are open to you all seem to give negative results. It is damned if you do and damned if you don't. But one course of action may be slightly better--may pay slightly better dividends than the others. In this case it is a matter of choosing the lesser evil. Evaluate your alternatives, try to determine whether one is more likely to achieve the objective that you have set for yourself and your organization than the others. Choose and then review your choice.

Once the decision has been made, set up some kind of control to ascertain that the decision is faithfully and effectively followed by your subordinates. This may mean a report back, it may mean a written report, it may mean a check by another employee, but whatever you do, try to see to it that the control which you exercise is a practical one. I suspect that most of the so-called red tape which is associated with government is tied to the control element that you have to exercise. So try to strike a balance between too little control and too much red tape, which results in excessive control and probably slows down the execution of the decision.

Let me give you some DON'TS to keep in mind in connection with decision making. No. 1 and foremost, don't delay beyond the time for effective action. I have a poem here written by a man named Guytrash, called "A Bureaucrat's Lament," which I think is illustrative of this particular point. It goes like this:

I had a little document as pure as driven snow,  
Yet everywhere that paper went it wandered to and fro.  
I thought that people gladly and swiftly would concur,  
But while I waited sadly, they cavil and demur.  
Some thought the paper much too short; others, much too long,  
Some thought the language much too weak, others, much too strong.  
So by the time that document came dawdling back my way  
It made no difference where it went - the issue was passe.

Don't be content with the face value of data or opinion. Look behind the scene. Don't guess when research can validate. Don't rely on snap judgments or hurried decisions when you have ample time to study and evaluate. Don't forget that decisions cannot be made in a vacuum--that people have to make them work.

Your ultimate objective is a well managed organization. The people who make up a well managed organization are:

1. Alert to the necessity for decision and opportunities to take the initiative.
2. Sensitive to the thoughts and the needs of others.
3. Effective in communicating, in selling the need for a change.
4. Discerning in judging relationships and their impact upon other people.
5. Imaginative and creative in developing solutions to problems.
6. Generous in delegating responsibility yet retaining full accountability for final results.
7. Last and by no means least, they are vigilant in distributing credit for success.

Whether you like it or not, you all are decision makers. I am told that most modern executives are what we would call non-deciders, negative deciders. Thus is unfortunate, because the best decision makers are the ones who render positive decisions. If you make a decision you are often going to be wrong. You may be like the home run hitters, you may strike out a great many times but you are going to get a lot of home runs too. Those are the people that we have to look to for leadership in the kind of an organization that you and I cherish.

## HOW TO FIND TIME TO MANAGE

### Panel

Harry A. Peters, Director, Northeast Area, Chairman  
Carrol E. McAdam, Deputy Director, Midwest Area  
John Thurston, Staff Assistant, DASCO

### Organizing Your Job in Management

Mr. Peters outlined some of the main ideas in the book of this title by Carl Heyel, which the State Executive Directors were asked to read before the conference.

First, analyse your situation. Size up your job. What is expected of you, what results are you expected to accomplish? Size up yourself as to qualifications, training and experience in relation to your particular job.

Identify the main problem areas so you can select the ones you want to concentrate on and find time to resolve. You will need to ask yourself a number of questions:

Do I spend enough time in the field or am I desk bound?

Are key posts covered? Are there any weak sisters in the organization? Are personnel changes needed? Are replacements trained to take over in case of sudden vacancies?

Am I spending too much time putting out fires?

Are operations sufficiently programmed, that is, have standard procedures been set up for routine or repetitive operating tasks and problems?

Do I follow the principle of management by exception, that is, do I establish objectives, plans, and schedules and then concentrate on those things which are failing to meet the objectives or are behind schedule?

Is there a proper cutoff point for personal decisions, so that decisions below this point are left to others?

Do I delegate authority effectively? If not, what is the reason--do I lack confidence in the ability of others to do the job, am I reluctant to admit that someone else knows more than I do, am I afraid of not getting the credit, do I have a fear of subordinates moving ahead too fast?

When I delegate authority, do I establish adequate controls or checks so that I know what is happening and whether the work is getting done properly and on time?

Have I established objectives that I want my organization to achieve?

Are the reports coming into my office adequate but not more than I need to exercise effective control?

Am I prone to procrastinate, to put off unpleasant actions until tomorrow? Am I thus delaying action on problems that need to be dealt with today?

Is there room to improve communications in both directions, that is, with my superiors as well as with my subordinates?

Am I exercising effective leadership?

Do I use effective management techniques in planning, coordinating, and directing the work of my organization?

Are the meetings which I call necessary and productive and do they accomplish the purposes I have in mind when setting them up?

One of the most important of these questions, Mr. Peters said, is that of delegation. J. Wilson Newman, President of Dun and Bradstreet said, "Never undertake what you can delegate, never do anything someone can do better and faster. It is personal vanity, folly, and time-wasting to imagine you have to do everything yourself."

#### How State Executive Directors Spend Their Time

Three State Executive Directors had been asked to indicate the percentage of their time spent on different matters. These were as follows:

Lee Seidell, California (not including leave)

Out of town meetings	22 per cent
Fieldmen's meetings	5
State Committee meetings	10
Conferring with State office personnel	13
Reviewing procedures and incoming and outgoing mail	13
Telephone	11
Dictation	5
Appointments with farmers, county committeemen, and others	9
Meeting with other USDA agencies	3
Self improvement	5
Defense board activities	2

John Ervin, New York

Staff meetings	10 per cent
Fieldmen's meetings	5
State Committee meetings	5
Discussions with State Committee Chairman	5
Meetings with other agricultural agencies and State college	10
Meetings with agri-business including livestock feed business	10
Appearances at service clubs, granges, etc.	5
Attending training meetings, committeemen's banquets, retirement parties, getting acquainted with county committeemen	20
Routine office detail	20
Telephone	10

Jack Foust, Ohio

Reading mail and procedures	5 per cent
Conferring with State office personnel, including staff meetings	20
Telephone	12
State Committee meetings, hearings, and fieldmen's meetings	40
Other meetings, including field travel	15
Signing correspondence	5
Dictation	3

General discussion followed. One State Executive Director pointed out that there is a tendency for program specialists to take matters to the State Committee which it does not need or want to consider. This must be controlled by the State Executive Director in connection with the preparation of the agenda.

#### Knowing the Programs and Procedures

To what extent should the State Executive Director know the programs? The consensus was that he should know the programs generally, but that he can't and shouldn't try to know them so well that he can answer specific questions about the interpretation of procedural details. Several of the State Directors indicated that they had learned the hard way that it is better not to try to answer detailed questions. This is why we have program specialists. One Director said that as a minimum the State Executive Director should know the procedures well enough so that he can tell whether the programs are being carried out effectively and properly in the State, and what to do about it if they are not. The State Director should know the programs well enough to be able to set realistic goals and to be able to help guide the program specialists in making important decisions. However, if

he tries to know every program in detail, he is bound to neglect the broad management responsibilities of planning, organizing, directing and giving leadership, coordinating, and developing his people. This is the job that he is paid to do and that no one else can do.

The group discussed the following ten point summary of the Administrator's talk given on the first day:

What We Expect of the State Executive Directors

1. Final goal or result: Outstanding service to farmers and others.
2. State Committee served effectively.
3. Vigorous leadership in State and county operations.
4. State office effectively organized.

Delegate, utilize talents of employees.

5. Work of State office effectively planned.
6. Operations coordinated and balanced.
7. Employees in State office trained and helped to develop.
8. County offices operate effectively.

SED knows county people.

Effective training program.

9. Good external relations and information at State and county levels.
10. An alert, energetic, effective team devoted to public service.

Point 4--getting the State office effectively organized, seeing that the people understand their jobs and what is expected of them in the way of results--is the key to a lot of things. Point 6--coordinating operations--has frequently been mentioned as one of the main things that State Executive Directors feel they are responsible for.

Point 9--good external relations--includes not only information activities but the whole matter of relations with other agricultural agencies, the public, agri-business, service clubs, farm organizations, State colleges, and other outside organizations.

One of the State Directors remarked that point 10 seems to sum up pretty well the overall objective of the State Executive Director.

Mr. McAdam said that one thing which concerns him is the lack of a back-up man for many of the positions in State offices, that is, someone who can step into the position with brief intensive training in case of a sudden vacancy or illness. It is desirable to try to get good county office managers and others on the appropriate civil service register so we can reach them as vacancies occur. One State Director said that we need to bring young people in as trainees for program specialist and operations assistant positions. Perhaps the best source is young county office managers or manager trainees.

One State Executive Director said that as a result of the discussions in the workshop he feels he should leave more of the details to the program specialists, that he sees his main job as keeping his finger on the overall operations, finding out how the counties are doing and how the fieldmen are operating. While he feels that he needs to work closely with the program specialists and from time to time review with them what they are doing and occasionally run checks, he should be able to turn more things over to them so that he can spend more time on the important tasks of general leadership, oversight, and management.

Another State Executive Director said that we need to set aside a certain amount of time for planning--perhaps a half hour or an hour a day to be alone to think about programs and administration and things we want to set in operation within the State and in the counties. (Mr. Cox: What we might call think time). This is hard to find.

Mr. McAdam: This comes right back to the meat of the whole thing--delegation. This is one of the weakest points in many of the State offices. We fail to do it. Somehow or other you have to relieve yourselves of the details so that you can do the very things we have been talking about.

One of the State Executive Directors asked whether it is expected that the State Director sit through appeals and hearings before the State Committee. Mr. Cox: It is not necessary for you to be there all the time. You will want to use judgment. There will be some hearings where you will want to be there all the time and others where you can feel free to excuse yourself. You and the State Committee should also consider whether you are running the hearings longer than necessary. Of course, you must give the farmer a full and fair opportunity to present his case.

Another State Executive Director said that he had found tremendous variation in the quality of county committee hearings, which resulted in many appeals to the State Committee. He went out with a training program for county committees on how to conduct hearings. He got across the point that the county committee should not use the State Committee to escape a hard decision or get clear of a crotchety farmer. He said it is a wonder to behold how few appeals are now made to the State Committee.

A question was raised as to who should sign the mail. In nearly all the States represented, the State Executive Director or acting director signs. However, in two of the States section chiefs sign routine

correspondence. One of the State Directors said that he regards it as essential for him to sign; otherwise he would quickly lose control.

### How to Find Time to Manage

Mr. McAdam threw on the screen the following twelve points on how to find time to manage:

1. Determine the major things you want to accomplish.
2. Start doing them.
3. Give up doing things that are not as important.
4. See that the State office is effectively organized and managed. This is a big order.
5. Develop your people so they can handle more things on their own.
6. Then delegate.
7. Work out standard procedures for recurring problems.
8. Get the information you need and keep out information you don't need.
9. Learn how to communicate and listen so people will know what you mean and you will hear what they say.
10. Learn how to hold effective meetings that don't waste time.
11. Watch yourself with an eagle eye to see that you don't waste time on SMALL THINGS. Every unnecessary sheet of paper, phone call, and conversation takes a bite out of your time.
12. Make good use of your secretary.

In commenting on the foregoing points, Mr. McAdam said that some State offices have employees who are not carrying a full load. For one reason or another they have difficulty with their work. But there is probably some fruitful work these people can do. The State Director should give very careful attention to these situations and really try to see if he can put these employees to more productive use.

Mr. McAdam pointed out that there are many routine things, often of a repetitive nature, for which you can work out a standard procedure. This can save a good deal of time. Another important matter, he said is learning how to hold effective meetings. Some States are a little weak in this respect. They may not have the best possible agenda when the State Committee comes in. They may not plan their staff meetings. If you have

staff meetings on Monday, you should check with the program specialists and others on Friday to see what matters they have which should be brought up. Then they should be put on an agenda for the meeting. This may be merely an informal longhand list. Your secretary can be extremely useful in taking a lot of details off your hand. There are many very capable secretaries in the State offices. They take pride in being able to handle many things for you and save your time. Give them responsibility and they will do a good job for you.

In the final analysis, Mr. McAdam said, you must somehow define--and you will have to do the defining--what are the really important things on which you should spend your time.

### How to Save Time Through Effective Meetings

The following points on effective use of meetings would have been presented by Mr. Thurston, but time ran out.

1. Plan every meeting carefully.
  - a. What is the purpose? Do you need a meeting?
  - b. What do you want to accomplish?
  - c. Think of the responsibilities, problems, and interests of those attending, and gear the meeting to them.
  - d. Check physical facilities and materials far enough ahead.
  - e. Tell people what the meeting is about.
2. Information meetings.
  - a. Invite those who need the information.
  - b. Present the information clearly and as briefly as possible. Maybe have a dry run beforehand.
  - c. Use visual aids if they will help.
  - d. Have the audience participate. Questions, comments, discussion panel, etc.

This helps the audience understand and remember.
3. Discussion meetings.
  - a. Tell people IN ADVANCE what the problem is.
  - b. Get needed facts and make them available before the meeting.

- c. Encourage people to contribute ideas. Stimulate, don't dampen. You must want their ideas.
- d.. See that all important considerations, for and against, and main alternatives are discussed.

Ask thought provoking questions.

- e. Keep the discussion moving briskly and keep it on the subject.
- f. Try to come to some conclusion.
- g. As leader, keep pretty quiet.

Let the group do the talking. Don't take sides or try to sell your ideas. If you do, you will kill discussion.

#### 4. Staff meetings.

Can be for information or discussion as appropriate.

#### In Conclusion

Mr. Cox: Oliver Wendell Holmes said, "A man's mind once stretched by a new idea can never go back to its old dimension." I hope that all of you have received some new ideas in this meeting. I hope not only that you have received new ideas, but that you have been sufficiently encouraged so that you will try to put them into effect when you go back to your States.

## CURRENT PROGRAM DEVELOPMENTS

### Discussion group:

Everett H. F. Felber, Director, Farmer Programs Division, Chairman  
John B. Vance, Director, Conservation and Land Use Division  
Murray Thompson, Director, Policy and Program Appraisal Division  
Alfred Cumming, Acting Director, Bin Storage Division  
Wilson E. Westbrook, Director, Disaster and Defense Services Staff  
Joseph W. Clifton, Director, Aerial Photography Division  
John I. Morton, Director, Producer Associations Division

The members of the group discussed developments and problems in the areas for which their divisions and offices have responsibility.

## CURRENT ADMINISTRATIVE DEVELOPMENTS

### Discussion group:

Truman Cunningham, Assistant Deputy Administrator, Management, Chairman  
Andrew Nemshick, Director, Budget Division  
Marden D. Kimball, Director, Administrative Services Division  
John Haughey, Director, Personnel Management Division  
Jerome A. Miles, Director, Operations Analysis Staff  
James J. Sommers, Director, Fiscal Division

Mr. Cunningham pointed out that the President will insist that we operate with the greatest possible economy. It will be important to be able to show that we are operating in such a manner. He referred to the importance of practical training that will pay its way and to the importance of planning personnel replacements in connection with approaching retirement. Most important of all, he said, we must inspire all employees and develop strong esprit de corps and pride in accomplishment.

The panel members discussed developments and problems in their respective areas.

## CLOSING REMARKS

By Ray Fitzgerald, Deputy Administrator, State and County Operations

I hope this has been a worthwhile meeting for you. I expect that you learned very little that was new but perhaps you have had some important things refreshed in your mind which will benefit you and the organization in the months and years to come. Probably you benefited particularly from being able to get together and visit among yourselves and exchange information and views about methods of operation and administration. This exchange may have been the most profitable feature of this conference.

You are the man in the State office we in Washington look to for response and action once the signal is given. You are the man we put the finger on when we need some information and you bear the responsibility because of the position which you hold. You are the one individual we look to to see that a job is done and done right. This is not to say that we don't tolerate mistakes. We make them and we expect that other people will make mistakes too. But we at least expect a whole-hearted effort on every occasion and the very best that you have to offer.

Something which should be mentioned is what I call administrative integrity of the organization. This has to do with loyalty. I would not want a man working for me who was disloyal to any degree. Neither would the Administrator want such a man in his organization, nor the Secretary of Agriculture, nor any administrator I know of whether in business or government.

We said the first day of the conference that this is a team and that whatever we set out to accomplish will be accomplished through a team effort. A team operates by pulling together. We expect that you will see to it that your State office and your State organization is a part of this team and that it pulls together with us and with other States in accomplishing our objectives.

Your first loyalty is not to someone outside the organization as far as administration of programs is concerned. It is to your area director, to my office, to the Administrator, and to the Secretary of Agriculture that you owe your administrative loyalty. In the long run, you will find it very unprofitable, I suggest, to repeatedly enlist the aid of people outside the organization in order to accomplish some minor objective which may seem at the time to be very important to you personally.

I have heard the Administrator many times stress that above all he admires loyalty in the people who work with him. He doesn't always ask for the very best people--witness myself--but he does demand that once those people are appointed they be loyal to him.

I think you can readily understand that if the people in whom you have placed trust and upon whom you have placed responsibility are disloyal to any degree the team effort is weakened. Absence of administrative loyalty hurts not just the Administrator and not just you but the whole organization. This is something I think you should think about rather seriously.

This does not mean that you are not responsible in many other ways to many other people, but as far as the administration of our programs is concerned, your first loyalty is to your area director, to my office, and to the Administrator. This is the way any organization has to operate. Otherwise it will become less than an effective organization. We can't afford to be less than an effective organization because the welfare of too many families is dependent upon the way in which we operate--not only farm families but the people who live in the towns and cities in your county and your State and in this nation.

So I think that if I were going to leave you with one thought it would be the matter of integrity of organization. That integrity and your loyalty to it will determine to a considerable degree the success of the ASCS organization and the effectiveness of its contribution to the well-being of our country.

We have a very fine organization. It has been getting better mostly because we have people in the States, in the area offices, and on my staff who are competent and who are dedicated to the proposition that this must be not just a good organization but the best. I think it is by far the best in the USDA and I'd be willing to debate the point with any other administrator in the Department. We are becoming more efficient, we are becoming more responsive, we are becoming more effective.

So thank you for all you have done, not for me or for the Administrator or the Secretary of Agriculture, but for having done a good job for the farmers in your State, the citizens in your State. You have done a good job but you cannot afford to rest on your laurels--it must be better. And I hope that in the next year we will see decided further improvement in the operation of all State offices in ASCS. Once again, thank you for the leadership which you have demonstrated. It has been outstanding and, believe me, it is appreciated.

OTHER SPEAKERS

The Conference was also addressed by:

Secretary of Agriculture Orville L. Freeman

Under Secretary Charles S. Murphy

Assistant Secretary Joseph M. Robertson

Assistant Secretary John A. Baker

Assistant to the Secretary Kenneth M. Birkhead

Associate Administrator, ASCS, Edwin A. Jaenke



